

Hearing date: March 19, 2025

Senate Judiciary Committee 2025 ND Legislature

Chairperson Diane Larson
Committee Members

From: Rozanna C Larson
Ward County State's Attorney

RE: House Bill 1305

Chairperson Larson and Members of the Committee,

This is my written testimony in favor of House Bill 1225 and ask the committee submits a DO PASS vote. I am the State's Attorney for Ward County and have been a prosecutor for 27 years.

The purpose of this bill is to address the issue of "squatters." To be clear, North Dakota does not have squatter's rights. What this bill will do will help in the prosecution of individuals who trespass into empty apartments, hotel rooms, or houses. Currently, the definition of dwelling in 12.1-22-06 does not apply to "empty" residential domiciles. By adding the language "or intended to be used as a home, residence, or sleeping place by an individual" we will be able to charge the felony level offense. As a prosecutor this is the typical squatter scenario that we have come to court. Individuals learn of vacant apartments or houses, they will go in and "live" until they are discovered and removed.